Losses due to Soil Erosion

1834. SHRIMATI N.R DURGA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country was suffering heavy losses due to massive soil erosion; and

(b) if so, the measures proposed to maintain a balance between nature and development, ensuring environment-friendly growth?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALLU): (a) and (b) Soil erosion takes place due to natural factors like unstable geological formations of mountains heavy rains, cloudburst and biotic factors like faulty land use practices, construction activities, inadequate tree cover etc. in the catchment areas of the major river systems. It is a major problem on degraded hilly slopes and areas prone to floods. However, there is no alarming report that the country is suffering from an unusual and unprecedented situation of soil erosion.

Checking soil erosion and denudation in the catchment areas of rivers, lakes and reservoirs in the interest of soil and water conservation is one of the basic objectives of the National Forest Policy, 1988. The measures taken to check soil erosion include forest protection activities and Joint Forest Management Programme, National Afforestation Programme for plantation on degraded forest land, watershed development and soil conservation works on agricultural land etc.

Special legislative measures like the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 are also in place to maintain a balance between nature and development. This Act regulates diversion of forest lands for non-forestry purposes and also provides for compensatory afforestation on equivalent/more area of non-forest/degraded forest land.

All these measures help to maintain a balance between nature and development, ensuring environment-friendly growth.

Testing of Environmental Product

1835. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has a system for testing any forms of environmental products;

(b) if so, the details of each of them; and

(c) the details of progress made by Government in promoting the development and use of environmentally sound products and services and new technologies that take into consideration full life cycle impacts?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALLU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Environment and Forests had notified a scheme for Eco-Mark for certification of environmentally friendly products. Under this scheme, Bureau of Indian Standards/Directorate of Marketing and Inspection have been designated as certifying agencies. A product has to meet the requirements specified in relevant national standards for obtaining Bureau of Indian Standards certification licence for Eco-Mark. This scheme is voluntary. The objective of the Eco-Mark scheme is to encourage citizen to purchase products, whcih are having least harmful environmental impact, and ultimately to improve the quality of environment and to encourage sustainable management of resources. The basic criteria of Eco-Mark Scheme cover broad environmental, levels and aspects (general requirement) but specific at the product level (product specific requirement).

JBIC of forestry project in Gujarat

1836. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gujarat Government has submitted a new forestry development project for funding by the Japan Bank for International Corporation (JBIC);

(b) if so, the salient features of the project; and

(c) when Government propose to pose this project to Japan Bank for International Corporation (JBIC)?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALLU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.